

SENATE RECORD VOTE ANALYSIS

104th Congress
1st Session

Vote No. 492

October 19, 1995, 4:08 p.m.
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CUBAN LIBERTY ACT/Travel to Cuba

SUBJECT: Cuban Liberty and Democratic Solidarity (LIBERTAD) Act of 1995 . . . H.R. 927. Graham motion to table the Simon modified amendment No. 2934 to the Helms substitute amendment No. 2936 to the Dole et al. substitute amendment No. 2898.

ACTION: MOTION TO TABLE AGREED TO, 73-25

SYNOPSIS: As introduced, H.R. 927, the Cuban Liberty and Democratic Solidarity (LIBERTAD) Act of 1995, will strengthen sanctions against the communist Cuban government.

The Dole et al. substitute amendment would strengthen international sanctions against the Castro dictatorship in Cuba, develop a plan to support a transition government leading to a democratically elected government in Cuba, and enact provisions addressing the unauthorized use of property of United States citizens confiscated by the Castro dictatorship.

The Helms substitute amendment to the Dole substitute amendment would enact all the provisions of the Dole amendment except for the provisions addressing the unauthorized use of property of United States citizens confiscated by the Castro dictatorship.

The Simon modified amendment would forbid restrictions on travel to Cuba by United States citizens unless armed hostilities between Cuba and the United States were in progress or unless such travel would pose an imminent threat to the health or safety of those travelers.

Debate was limited by unanimous consent. Following debate, Senator Graham moved to table the Simon amendment. Generally, those favoring the motion to table opposed the amendment; those opposing the motion to table favored the amendment.

Those favoring the motion to table contended:

Travel to Cuba would benefit only Fidel Castro. Our colleagues sincerely believe that lifting travel restrictions on American tourists would allow them to meet with Cuban citizens and expose them to American values. Though we have the utmost respect for our colleagues' sincerity, we do not see on what basis they could possibly arrive at this conclusion. In the past few years Castro has

(See other side)

YEAS (73)			NAYS (25)		NOT VOTING (1)	
Republicans (51 or 96%)	Democrats (22 or 49%)		Republicans (2 or 4%)	Democrats (23 or 51%)	Republicans (0)	Democrats (1)
Abraham	Helms	Bradley	Hatfield	Akaka		Biden ⁻²
Ashcroft	Hutchison	Breaux	Jeffords	Baucus		
Bennett	Inhofe	Bryan		Bingaman		
Bond	Kassebaum	Byrd		Boxer		
Brown	Kempthorne	Conrad		Bumpers		
Burns	Kyl	Daschle		Dodd		
Campbell	Lott	Exon		Dorgan		
Chafee	Lugar	Ford		Feingold		
Coats	Mack	Glenn		Feinstein		
Cochran	McCain	Graham		Harkin		
Cohen	McConnell	Heflin		Inouye		
Coverdell	Murkowski	Hollings		Johnston		
Craig	Nickles	Kerry		Kennedy		
D'Amato	Pressler	Kohl		Kerrey		
DeWine	Roth	Lautenberg		Leahy		
Dole	Santorum	Lieberman		Levin		
Domenici	Shelby	Mikulski		Moseley-Braun		EXPLANATION OF ABSENCE:
Faircloth	Simpson	Nunn		Moynihan		1—Official Buisiness
Frist	Smith	Reid		Murray		2—Necessarily Absent
Gorton	Snowe	Robb		Pell		3—Illness
Gramm	Specter	Rockefeller		Pryor		4—Other
Grams	Stevens	Sarbanes		Simon		
Grassley	Thomas			Wellstone		
Gregg	Thompson					SYMBOLS:
Hatch	Thurmond					AY—Announced Yea
	Warner					AN—Announced Nay
						PY—Paired Yea
						PN—Paired Nay

Compiled and written by the staff of the Republican Policy Committee—Don Nickles, Chairman

built a booming tourist industry. Canadians and Europeans flock to Cuba's plush seaside resorts. Castro has built this industry to get the hard currency from tourists that his regime so desperately needs now that it no longer gets billions of aid yearly from the Soviet Union. Average Cubans, though, never see these tourists--they are kept carefully segregated from vacationers in what has become known as "tourist apartheid." The Cuban government controls all employment--every employee in Cuba's tourist industry is hand-picked by Castro's cronies. In a sick twist on the tourist trade, Cuba has now become what an Italian travel magazine recently identified as the "paradise of sexual tourism," ranking it above Thailand and Brazil for the availability of prostitutes, some as young as 14, who are desperate to find ways to feed themselves and their families in the collapsing Cuban economy. We ask our colleagues, what values will we be promoting if the only contact American vacationers have with Cubans is with the few hand-picked government employees who run the resorts and with starving, underage Cuban girls who must prostitute themselves to Americans to survive? Castro would laugh all the way to the bank if we were to approve the Simon amendment. He would love us to send plenty of tourists with plenty of money to prop up his regime, especially when he knows that the Cuban people will wind up rightly despising them.

Some Senators have stated that they believe that the ban on travel to Cuba violates the first amendment because Americans would not be in danger from travelling there. Those Senators should be aware that twice the ban has been upheld as constitutional because it is in the national security interests of the United States to continue the ban. Cuba may not be the most dangerous hostile power in the world today, but it is only 90 miles off the coast and is engaged in gun running, drug trafficking, and terrorism throughout the hemisphere. Clearly it is in our national security interests to continue isolating Cuba, especially at a time when it is in severe financial distress due to its loss of Soviet aid.

The tourism industry is soon projected to be the largest Cuban industry, surpassing even sugar production. Right now only a few Americans sneak around the ban by travelling through third countries, but making travel legal would result in enormous growth in the Cuban tourist industry as Americans travelled the short 90 miles to vacation. Castro's rule would be prolonged by their spending. We oppose that result, and thus oppose this amendment.

Those opposing the motion to table contended:

The Simon amendment should be supported both for first amendment reasons and for policy reasons. On the former, we think that the spirit of the first amendment prohibits the United States from restricting the right of Americans to travel anywhere in the world unless that restriction is necessary to protect those Americans. Tourists from all over the world regularly travel to Cuba with no risk whatsoever. Therefore, because there is no risk, Americans also should be allowed to travel to this country. On the later, we think that allowing Americans to go to Cuba will hasten the end of its communist government. Our colleagues are absolutely correct that the Castro regime has the worst human rights record of any country in this hemisphere, and we join them emphatically in their hope that Cuba will soon be free of communist oppression. We part ways with our colleagues only on the means of achieving that end. They believe that we should not allow tourists to go to Cuba because Cuba will gain hard currency from them; we, on the other hand, believe that any benefit Castro gains from hard currency will be outweighed by the benefit we will gain from exposing average Cubans to American views. We had this debate before about tourism to the Soviet Union, and we found that the power of our ideas was more destabilizing to it than the money our tourists spent was supportive of it. A final reason for supporting the Simon amendment is because it is already the de facto policy of the United States. United States citizens who want to travel to Cuba simply travel through a third country to get there. Nevertheless, not once in U.S. history has any passport been revoked, nor has any citizen been charged, for going to Cuba. We think it is time to end the pretense, and allow free travel to Cuba, so we urge the adoption of the Simon amendment.